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RELIGIOUS AND MORAL ESSAYS.

THE SENTIMENTS OF THE HINDOOS RELATIVE TO THE CREATION.

"These are *thy* glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty, *thine* this universal frame,
Thus wonderous fair, thyself, how wonderous then
Unspeakable." MILTON.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the power of God." HEB. xi. 3.

THAT man, an intellectual agent, in the midst of a vast universe, should employ his frequent and deep researches, in tracing the origin of himself and of the world he inhabits, excites no surprise. But that the result of his investigations should exhibit such masses of incoherence, absurdity and folly as we find to be the fact, must astonish every person that has not an acquaintance with the depravation and enmities of an unsanctified heart. Such and so numerous are the dependencies the creation presents, the characters of profound design and sovereign energy, of bounteous effusion and of vigilant providence, are every where so legible, that the man who can deny the agency of a divine power in framing and sustaining the great system, must be left "without excuse."

A christian may sit at the feet of a learned Grecian, and with mingled surprise and satisfaction, hear him discourse on architecture, language, oratory, and poetry; but how must he be filled with pity and indignation on hearing it asserted that this earth is

the origin of all things. Terra, or the earth, is said to have produced, and for the gratifying of her impure propensities, to have thrown around her Cælus or the heavens. These became the parents of Saturn, the most ancient of the gods, and he the progenitor of the rest. Many of the philosophers of ancient days contended that the world, both as to matter and form, is without origin or end. The circularity of the earth is the idle reason assigned by Ocellus Lucanus, for its eternal duration; while the less ridiculous, but equally inconclusive one of Aristotle, is the impossibility that a divine mind could conceive of so grand a system as the universe, without instantly creating it.

Lucretius describes animals as coming up from the ground like plants, and seems delighted with the fantastical picture he draws. While he exhibits, rising from the surface of his prolific earth, here a head, and yonder an arm; on this spot a half formed ox, and on that a finished gander; with an air of exultation he sings,

> "How things were made, and how preserv'd we'll prove,
> Without the trouble of the gods above."

Sanchoniatho insists that the first principle of the universe was air; that air produced mud; that from mud sprang senseless animals, and that these were the parents of men, who when formed, lay on the ground in a death-like sleep: that when first the thunder rolled through the sky, these sleeping animals awoke with horror, and male and female moved on the earth. Anaximander is clear that human beings were generated in the intestines of fishes. Berosus, to whom we are indebted for the best statement of the cosmogony of the Babylonians says, that, over a disordered chaos a woman named Omoroca presided; that Belus came, and dividing the woman in the midst, with one half of her made the earth, and with the other the heavens; that Belus perceiving the earth without inhabitants, commanded one of the gods to cut off his own head, and mixing the earth with the blood that issued thence, to form men and beasts.

It will be remembered that these vain imaginations are not to be ascribed to men unlettered and barbarous, but to the great philosophers of the heathen world. To enlarge their number were easy; but these are sufficient to discover the folly of the infidel, whose boast is the superiority of human reason, and to excite the gratitude of the saint, whom the Holy Ghost has better taught.

The following detail will show the strong resemblance the vagaries of one part of the heathen world bear to another.

Bernier, in his "Memoirs of the Empire of the Great Mogul," says, that the Pundits teach that a certain immense spider was the first cause of all things, which, drawing the matter from her own bowels, wove the web of the universe, disposing the whole with astonishing art. This spider is described as sitting in the centre of her work, and directing the motion of every part. When she has sufficiently pleased herself in ordering and contemplating this web, she will draw all the threads again into herself, and the universe will vanish. Lord, in his "Discovery of the Banian Religion," asserts, that it is the doctrine of the Hindoos, that the Almighty, having created the waters, by some great cane or hollow instrument blew upon them, and that thence a bubble arose and gradually swelled until it became a firmament and encompassed the world. It is, however, doubtful whether either of these statements be correct.

The Hindoos imagine that the universe consists of fourteen Bhoobuns or worlds, seven of which are below the earth, and six above it. The worlds below are inhabited by serpents of various shape and prodigious size. Some they say have two heads, some ten, and others a hundred. Basookee their king has a thousand heads, upon which he sustains the universe, while he himself is borne on the back of a tortoise, which is said to balance itself in open air. The worlds above, called the swurga or heavens, they suppose to be inhabited by a body of aërial beings. Some of their Pundits place the sun in the fourth of them, while others consider him as encircling all in his course, and illuminating with his splendors the fourteen worlds. Their gods Vishnoo, Seeb, and others, they regard as residing upon mount Soomeroo. This mountain, by which some conceive the north pole is intended, they say has its foundation in the lowest patal or world, and running through all the fourteen, like the stem of a flower, spreads itself at the top after the manner of a water-lily. On the formation of the universe they do not perfectly agree. The popular idea is, that the supreme being became resident in three goons or qualities, by the names of Bruhma, Vishnoo, and Seeb; the first to create, the second to preserve, and the third to destroy.

The acts of Bruhma, as creator, are in part described in the subsequent literal translation from the Rigvadee or Rich Veda, one of the most revered and valued books of India.

"Originally this universe was soul only; nothing else whatever existed, active or inactive. He [Bruhma] thought, I will create worlds; thus he created these various worlds, light, mortal beings, and the waters. The atmosphere comprises light, the earth is mortal, and the regions below are the waters."

"He thought, these are indeed worlds. I will create *guardians of worlds*. Thus he drew from the waters, and framed an embodied being. He viewed him; and of that being, so contemplated, the mouth opened as an egg; from the mouth, speech issued; from speech, fire proceeded: the nostrils spread; from the nostrils breath passed, and from breath air was propagated. The eyes opened; from the eyes a glance sprung, from that glance the sun was produced. The ears dilated; from the ears came hearkening, and from hearkening the regions of space. The skin expanded; from the skin hair arose, and from that grew herbs and trees. The breast opened; from the breast mind issued, and from the mind, the moon."

This embodied being, they seem to consider as an assemblage of deities. "These deities being thus framed, fell into this vast ocean, and to him [Bruhma] they came with thirst and hunger, and him they thus addressed. 'Grant us a smaller size, wherein abiding we may eat food.' He offered to them the form of a cow; they said, 'this is not pleasant for us.' He exhibited to them the form of a horse. They said, 'neither is that pleasant for us.' He showed them the human form; they exclaimed, 'WELL DONE! OH! WONDERFUL!' Therefore man alone is pronounced well-formed."

"He bade them occupy their respective places: fire becoming speech, entered the mouth; air, becoming breath, sought the nostrils; the sun, becoming light, entered the eyes; space became hearing, and occupied the ears; herbs and trees became hair, and filled the skin, and the moon, becoming intelligence, entered the breast."

It is curious to observe how much the human mind, in its unscriptural conjectures, is fond of the marvellous. The Talmudists say, that Adam reached from one end of the earth to the other, when first created, but that when he had sinned, God *squeezed* his stature to a hundred ells, the angels being terrified at his gigantic size. Mahomet taught the Arabians that Adam was as high as a tall palm tree; and if you ask a Pundit, the ex-

tent of the earth, he will answer, one hundred thousand zozus, or eight hundred thousand miles.

Of the form of the earth the Hindoos have no determinate ideas. They all agree that it consists of seven dweeps, but whether these dweeps are continents or islands, they are not agreed. The most general opinion is, that these seven dweeps surround each other, and that seven seas run between them. Among these seas one is said to be a sea of milk, which was churned to produce Luckshmee. A slice cut from the midst of a large onion, with the different integuments inclosing each other, nearly represents the idea a Hindoo entertains of the earth.

He has no conception that the world will have any end. The Pundits imagine that four joogs will follow one another in perpetual succession, the Sutya, the Treta, the Dwaper and the Kulee. When one succession of joogs expires, another commences. The Sutya joog, they say consisted of one million, seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand years. In this joog all men were perfectly pure and happy. In the Treta joog, human beings began to degenerate. It is said to have lasted twelve hundred and ninety-six thousand years. During the Dwaper joog, which continued eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand years, the degeneracy of man increased. The Kulee joog commenced five thousand years ago, and they say will continue four hundred and thirty-two thousand more. It is esteemed the age of wickedness; nothing perfect can be performed, and the Brahmans have lost their energy. It is common for a native, when detected in lying, or cheating, to reply, "This is the Kulee joog, what can you expect."

It is time we dismiss these trifling ideas: but who can contemplate them, without commiserating the situation of the heathen world, and offering praises to God, whose work of creation his word so rationally, so divinely exhibits. It is one of the loud anthems of heaven, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they both are and were created." Happy the men who love and join the sacred song,

The dearest nerve about my heart,
Should it refuse to bear a part,
With my melodious breath:
I'd tear away the vital chord,
A bleeding victim to my Lord,
And live without that impious string,
Or show my zeal in death.

PARLOUR PREACHING.

Eusebius, who, when he hears of any calamity amongst the people of his charge, never waits to be sent for, went to pay a visit at a house, where, until lately, no sound was to be heard, but that of gaiety and mirth: but death had now entered in a very sudden and awful manner; and not content with one victim, ceased not his ravages, until three blooming youths, within the short space of one year, were levelled with the dust.

This family had, for a long time, been unusually free from afflictive visitations; and infatuated by uninterrupte pro sperity, God and eternity were forgotten, whilst amusements, falsely called innocent, had usurped the place of family instruction and devotion, and had even encroached upon the sacred hours of the sabbath.

At any time previous to these awful strokes of divine providence, a visit from Eusebius would have appeared like an intrusion, as it would have interrupted some favourite amusement; but now he was more welcome than any of the numerous train of customary visitants, who, although they were deeply affected by the recent events which had occurred in the family, were poorly qualified to administer consolation to the bereaved parents. The first emotions of grief, under such afflicting dispensations, are commonly too strong to be resisted; and the suffering soul is rather irritated than soothed, by officious attempts to alleviate its anguish. Eusebius, aware of this, did no more on his first visit, than sympathize with the relatives of the deceased, who appeared to be overwhelmed with the profoundest grief. But on the second visit, he found them more composed, and therefore he proceeded to make such observations as he thought might be useful, both in relieving their anguish, and in leading them to a proper improvement of the painful visitation of the Almighty. The father of the family, was a man of good understanding, and possessed of a considerable share of natural firmness; but these successive strokes were too much for his philosophy, and the strength of his nerves united, to enable him to bear. His unsuccessful efforts to sustain the shock, only served to give more manifest evidence of his weakness. At first he remained profoundly silent, and although he listened attentively to the discourse of Eusebius, yet he returned no answer to any

of his observations. At length, however, his swelling grief would have vent, and he exclaimed, "I am the most miserable of men! Attempt not to comfort me—I seem to be set up as a mark for the arrows of divine vengeance. The cup of my affliction is full; I can suffer no more. The Almighty has blasted all my prospects, and my peace of mind can never be restored. But why he has chosen to pour out the vials of his wrath upon me, I know not. I am a sinner, it is true, but not worse than others who suffer none of these calamities. As *he* has taken from me the comforts of my life, and the expected props of my declining years, let him add one stroke more, and destroy me also—I desire to live no longer—the world is turned into a howling wilderness to me—it is impossible that any thing should now afford me consolation. O! my children! my children!"

The fulness of his heart here obstructed his utterance, and Eusebius thought that it was time to interpose; he therefore observed, "that the affliction was great, and that grief was natural; and provided it did not lead us to entertain hard thoughts of God, or excite in us a murmuring or discontented disposition, was forbidden neither by reason nor revelation. But," said he, "beware, my friend, lest in the anguish of your spirit, and in the bitterness of your sorrow, you rashly charge the providence of God with injustice in his dealings towards you. Remember, that your case is not peculiar. Similar afflictions are sent upon thousands; and it is not the most wicked and abandoned of the human race only, who are thus dealt with, but as frequently those who lead lives of exemplary piety. Consider also, that although your loss is incalculably great, the Sovereign of the universe has taken nothing but what he had a right to take. All comforts are his gifts, and are bestowed only for a time. He may, without injustice, recal them when he pleases. Therefore, although from the principles of our nature, we cannot repress our sorrow when our dearest relatives are snatched away by death, yet we have no reason to accuse the Almighty, who gives and takes according to the counsel of his own will, and is not bound to render to his creatures any account of his proceedings. Besides, let us consider whether our sins have not deserved all, and much more than we suffer. You think it hard that you should be punished more severely than many others, who are at least as great sinners as yourself. But if you suffer no more than you deserve, there is no injustice in the dealings of God towards

you. And with respect to others, their time may not yet be come. They may have to pass through afflictions as great as yours. But if all were now enduring calamities like yours, it would very little lighten your burden. These painful occurrences may be intended, as they are calculated, to issue in real blessings. A righteous God may be leaving others to suffer the just punishment of their sins in another world, whilst he may be using these means to purge you from your sins here, that you may escape future punishment. Many souls, now in glory, owe their salvation, under God, to severe and heart-rending afflictions.

The goodness of God has long been tried upon you—uninterrupted prosperity has attended your steps ever since you had a family, until the present year; but what effect it has produced, it is your part to consider. I may, however, without offence, suggest, that you have not made returns to your kind Benefactor, in any proportion to his merciful dealings towards you, and your family. Permit me to be plain with you. You have had a religious education, and in your early years were privileged with the instructions and example of an excellent father, the savour of whose name is still precious in this place, and the memory of whose pious and charitable acts will be long kept up among the children of want and distress. Now, although the course of your life has not been such, as, in the language of the world, is called *vicious*, yet it has been far removed from serious piety. It has been according to the course and fashion of this world, to which we are forbidden to be conformed, and very little regulated by the principles and precepts of the gospel of Christ. The pious usages and customs of your father's house have been neglected or forsaken—the reading of the scriptures—the singing of psalms, and offering up prayers to God, have been excluded, to make room for the card-table and a whole train of seductive amusements, which have received the sanction of a gay world. The house of God you have almost deserted. It seems to have been your chief ambition to live splendidly, to mingle with the great, and to secure the esteem of those who are reckoned honourable on earth; whilst the favour of God and the honour which comes from above, you have neglected to seek: and as you have permitted me to proceed so far, I will yet go farther. These children, whose untimely end you now deplore with such bitterness of grief, I well recollect, you solemnly dedicated to God in baptism, and promised to bring up *in*

the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The nature of this transaction you probably did not consider at the time. You entered into it as a matter of form, a thing of course; but this, instead of extenuating, rather aggravates your sin. Such trifling with the sacred institutions of heaven cannot escape the displeasure of the just Judge of all the earth. However careless and indifferent you were on the occasion, the obligations you were under were still sacredly binding. Have you then fulfilled your duty to your offspring? Have they been diligently nurtured and instructed in the school of Christ? Have they been admonished, restrained, encouraged, and stimulated upon christian principles? I forbear to press this inquiry. It is calculated to give rise to painful reflections. Your children were educated, I know, with great care; but I must say, that I fear religion had but little place in the system in which they were instructed. Early initiated into all the follies of a gay and corrupt world, they were taught to believe, that to *make a figure*, and shine in the eyes of men, was the most desirable object. You need not, therefore, be astonished, that a just and holy God has expressed his displeasure at your conduct. It may be in mercy that he has taken your children away. He has removed them from the evils to which they were daily exposed. And with regard to yourself, you should consider these dispensations as intended to open your eyes upon the sin and folly of your former course, and to reclaim you from the dangerous paths which you have hitherto pursued.

You consider your afflictions too great to admit of consolation; but be assured, that that holy religion in which you were educated, but which you have so long neglected, contains sources of comfort, sufficient to alleviate the keenest anguish to which human nature is subject. In the days of your prosperity, you saw no necessity for religion: it appeared to be rather calculated to disturb your peace, than to increase your enjoyments. But now, whatever you may think of christianity, you feel the need of something which the world cannot afford. The wealth, which you have amassed with unceasing care and unremitting toil, and for the sake of which you neglected your God and your soul, can now bring you no comfort. Your pretext for such unwearied exertion was, that you had children for whom it was your duty to provide a decent livelihood; but God, in the unsearchable dispensation of his providence, has taken them away. They now want

nothing of all which you have been so long treasuring up for their use! How clearly then may you see the vanity of placing your affections on these sublunary objects! You see now, that something is necessary to constitute happiness, besides the wealth and friendship of this world. I beseech you, therefore, to exercise your unbiassed reason a little on this subject, and be convinced, notwithstanding all your former prejudices, that the favour and friendship of God is the most necessary and desirable of all possessions. Reflect now, with impartiality, upon the scene of worldly prosperity through which you have passed, and carefully examine what degree of real satisfaction you enjoyed in these things. You professed to view the serious christian and humble penitent with pity; because, as you said, they deprived themselves of the principal pleasures of life, and doomed themselves voluntarily to misery: but are you not now convinced, that these mourning saints, whose heads hung down like the bulrush, were much happier than you were in the midst of noisy mirth, or in the acquisition of wealth and fame. You know that you were not at ease, even when the countenance assumed the appearance of satisfaction and contentment. You were always conscious of a secret flaw in your happiness. You could not avoid feeling the gnawings of an inward worm at the root of all your comforts. And after your greatest exertions to be happy, and even when for a season, you deceived yourself into the opinion that you were happy, what an uneasy vacuity succeeded all your pleasures! What a listless languor and insupportable depression! much more difficult to be borne, than a considerable degree of acute pain!

If these things strike you as they do me, I know not how you can avoid perceiving the propriety and necessity of a new course of life. Believe me, sir, you are now arrived at a critical period of your existence. Much depends upon the effect which this visitation of God shall produce on your mind. I hope, and earnestly pray, that by the grace of God, it may be rendered effectual to wean your affections from the world, and to lead you to seek an interest in the favour of God! The remarks which I have made may appear to you to be severe; but I assure you they have been dictated by a sincere and tender concern for your eternal welfare. I have indeed said more than I at first intended, encouraged by the patient attention which I perceive you have given to my observations. But now I must bid you adieu, hoping, that by the time I see you

again, these subjects will have been viewed by you in a more correct light than heretofore."

Eusebius rose up to take his leave, but his afflicted parishioner seized him by the hand, and intreated him to prolong his visit; "for," said he, "although I have been agitated with various strong feelings of pride and resentment, whilst you were speaking, yet, upon the whole, I have been benefited by your observations. I do see the vanity of the world in a clearer light than ever before. And I confess, that I see more things wrong in my own conduct, than I ever thought of before. But why do you entertain such an unfavourable opinion of me? You seem to think that I am the vilest of wretches. If I could believe that I was as culpable as you have represented me to be, I should despise and abhor myself, and consider myself as unfit to live upon the earth." Eusebius answered, that he did not consider him as worse than other worldly men, but that the effects which he had mentioned, would certainly follow from a clear view of his own sins; "and, sir," said he, "I am so far from thinking that such effects would be undesirable, that I should consider them as the beginning of a reformation. And that you may not suppose that I am fond of representing other men's sins to be great, whilst I think my own to be venial, I will confess to you, that my bad opinion of human nature is taken from a knowledge of the evils of my own heart and life. Those very views and feelings, which you so much deprecate in regard to yourself, I have experienced to my humiliation. I have seen my own character to be so vile in the sight of God, that I have actually abhorred myself, and reckoned myself unworthy to tread on the earth, or breathe the air: but although these feelings were painful and extremely mortifying, I would not for the world have been without them. Had I remained free from an experience of this sort, I should never have felt the need, nor known the worth, of a crucified Saviour. But to know him—to prize his atonement, and to be delighted with his character, is now all my hope and all my joy.—As you are pleased to receive my remarks, on the whole, with so much candour, I do not feel a freedom to leave you, as I was going to do, till I have asked you, if it be not your wish that we should unite together in prayer, that God would sanctify this affliction to you and your family, and support you under it." The proposal was readily embraced. The voice of fervent prayer was heard in a house to which it had before been a stranger. After which Eusebius departed.

THE SEAT OF DEPRAVITY IN THE HEART.

"I KNOW (says the apostle) that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The more experience any christian has in the divine life, the more he will be convinced of this truth. When a person is but little acquainted with spiritual exercises, he will be apt to have his attention occupied and his mind affected most with *particular acts* of sin. But as he grows in grace, and gets an acquaintance with himself, he will dwell less on individual transgressions, and more on the *source* of abomination from which they all proceed. He will look less at the streams, and more at the fountain. Not that an experienced christian will be regardless of particular acts of sin. He must and will be deeply affected by them; and if they have been reproachful to religion, he will do all in his power to repair the injury they have done it. But even these reproachful acts will lead him to dwell on, and mourn over, that *fountain of evil*, which there is in his heart; so that this will occupy his attention more than the individual transgressions into which he may have fallen. Thus it was with David, after his awful fall. His language is, "behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" and in praying for preservation, he still has a view to his heart. "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me." He prays indeed to be delivered from "blood guiltiness;" but his views seem principally fixed on his deep inward depravity, from which all had proceeded. And whoever will observe it, will find the same thing in other eminent saints. They are led by particular *effects* to the general *cause* of sin,—a body of sin and death.

THE CHILDREN OF GOD DISCRIMINATED.

THERE is this difference between the real children of God, and all hypocrites and apostates, that the former have in them *a principle* by which they are rendered incapable of *resting* in any thing but the love and favour of God. They may fall into great and sometimes gross sins; they may experience great declensions in the spiritual life, and for a considerable space of time; they may feel much coldness, deadness and backwardness in divine things, often repeated; and they may at times be sunk into great dejection and despondence: but still there is a principle in them which will

not permit them to take up their *rest* in such a situation, or to abandon themselves to a course of sin. They will feel, that they cannot be contented till they get back to the divine favour, and have something of the light of God's countenance, which to them is better than life. This principle in real believers is preserved by the free grace of God, given to them according to his immutable purpose. It is preserved, because this purpose is immutable. "His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." It is a possession which no unsanctified soul ever had, and which no sanctified soul was ever yet without. Its existence however, is not always discerned even by believers themselves. Nay, while they remain in a state of declension and backsliding, they have good cause to suspect its existence. Yet after a believer has had much experience of the restoring grace of God, recovering him, when he was sunk very low, and reviving him, when he was almost dead, he acquires an evidence that he is truly interested in the covenant of grace, which ought not to be easily shaken, even in times of spiritual darkness and difficulty. He may and ought to say with David, "hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him." And a longing desire of returning to a free and comfortable walk with God, and a sensible fear of his displeasure, is always a hopeful mark to a christian "who walks in darkness," that he is a real disciple of Jesus.

A MISTAKE CORRECTED.

We often hear it said, that "the children of good people are commonly as bad as any." This is a palpable falsehood. On the contrary the church has been principally kept up, in every age, from the seed of the faithful. A minister of the gospel, who had served the same congregation for nearly half a century, once assured the writer, that three fourths of the communicants then in his church were, to his knowledge, the children of communicants; and yet the half of his congregation probably had never been communicants. There are however a number (and taken collectively a very considerable number) of the most profligate and abandoned of men, who are the offspring of the most eminent saints. What then does this dispensation teach us? On the one hand, it plainly and forcibly teaches the duty and advantage of religious instruction and education, and God's favour to his people

in answering their prayers in blessings on their descendants. On the other hand, it not only teaches the divine sovereignty in choosing its own subjects for grace and glory, but also that true religion does not depend on the natural constitution either of body or mind; because those who derive such constitution from their parents are sometimes totally different from and opposite to them in moral qualities, and in devout dispositions and pious habits. It teaches, in a word, that the children of God are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

BETHESDA.

"Receive the blessing and adore the grace,
That threw in this *Bethesda* your disease.
If unrestored by this, despair your cure."

YOUNG.

WHEN our Lord, as "the light of the world," had anointed with clay, the eyes of a blind man, he instructed him to go and wash, not in the pool of Bethesda, but in Siloam. Had he sent him to Bethesda, the Jews might have ascribed the cure, not to the power of Christ, but to the healing quality of the waters. But whence, it may be asked, was this quality derived? The scripture states, that an angel descended, at a certain season, and troubled the water. The hypothesis that Bethesda was the receptacle of the blood of the sacrifices, and that the high priest occasionally commissioned a messenger (or angel) to stir and trouble the water, imparting by this mean a virtue, which, in the sight of the heathen, served to honour the oblations of Moses, although introduced by so respectable an authority as Dr. Hammond, has found, and may be expected to find, few supporters. Dr. Doddridge, with considerable probability, supposes, that this pool might be remarkable for some mineral attending the water, and that this circumstance, together with its proximity to the temple, where, for religious purposes, a bath was so desirable, may account for stately porches raised around it. An extraordinary motion had been observed in the water, and, by the direction of providence, some diseased persons entering, found an instant and unexpected cure. At subsequent commotions, similar effects might follow. These the Jews probably ascribed to some angelic power, as they afterwards attributed a voice from heaven.

At what period this sanative turbulence commenced and subsided, cannot be ascertained. It appears to have occurred only during the ministry of Jesus Christ; nothing is heard of its extraordinary virtues before or after that period. The design of this miracle appears to have been to honour the name, testify the Messiahship, and present an emblem of the healing power of our Lord and Saviour. In relation to this last idea, the following reflections on the pool of Bethesda, are suggested.

Man is a creature diseased. In a moral view, he is "blind, lame, halt and withered," and exposed to eternal death. He is the subject of an entire incapacity of self-relief. Like the multitude round the water, he lies prostrate and is impotent. Whatsoever of reliance his bosom cherishes, it is not on the Lord, but in an arm of flesh. If he remain diseased, it is because he sees *no man* to put him in the pool. It is true, the afflicted at Bethesda, were, in comparison of the whole human race, but few; while sin has dishonoured and infected all mankind. The man, whose cure our Lord produced, had indeed been thirty and eight years in that case; but, if a man live twice that period, he will remain morally diseased, unless the grace of Christ restore him. Few could have passed the cloisters of Bethesda, without dropping the tear of tender commiseration; but alas! how few lay to heart the deplorable condition of themselves, and of their fellow creatures.

It is thine, O wondrous pool! to discover to our astonished and grateful observance, the efficacy of a Saviour's grace. Thy *name* is significant. *Bethesda!* it is *the house of mercy*. Destitute of merit, and sunk in an abyss of guilt and impurity, a sinner's salvation is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Thy *situation* is significant. From "Jerusalem" the word of the Lord went forth in the ministry of the apostles, and the churches of Christ remain the seats of spiritual healing. Thy sheep market, O Bethesda! shall teach me the necessity of an atonement, and the worth of that lovely object who "was led as a lamb to the slaughter." I will learn, as I gaze on thy agitated wave, the necessity of foreign agency in a sinner's deliverance. The sick on thy margin, the priests and the people of Jerusalem, might have disturbed thy surface; but could never have communicated a medical power. A messenger from heaven must descend, or man must perish. I see the troubling of the pool is not sufficient for restoration; the blind and the lame

must *step in.* Into the waters of life, in the exercise of a living faith, may I be assisted to pass. The efficacy of Bethesda, which healed the afflicted of "whatsoever disease he had," shall encourage my flight. O may it animate the flight of thousands! to that precious blood "which cleanseth us from *all* sin."

But, O how insufficient the pool to display the full glories of the Redeemer! Bethesda could relieve only at "a certain season;" Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." His accepted time is *now.* He only, who *first* stepped in, was healed; but Paul with triumph assures us, that "for this cause he obtained mercy, that Christ Jesus in him *first* might show forth all long suffering, for an example to them that should afterwards believe." A sick man, wearied with delay, might leave the porticoes of Bethesda and find relief in Jerusalem, or in other places. Our Lord himself gave strength to the man who had an infirmity, without his entering the pool. He said, rise, take up thy bed and walk, and he did so; but, there is "no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved," except the name of Christ. The virtues of Bethesda were transient, but not so the virtues of Jesus. He continues to appear as though newly slain. The saint is permitted to sing,

> Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
> Shall never lose its power,
> Till all the ransom'd church of God
> Be sav'd to sin no more.

Only some who came to the pool obtained relief. It is probable many were left to die in the porches, in sight of the water; but none that have applied to Christ for salvation, have been ever rejected. His gracious invitation is, "Whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely."

The story of the cure at Bethesda, may teach the christian his duty. Let him admire the mysterious system of salvation. Turbulent waters seem more likely to drown than to deliver; but the ways of the Lord are not as ours. Let him bow before that sovereignty which, while one is taken and another left, gives no account of any of its matters. Let the sinner, sick with transgression, continue waiting for the display of a Saviour's love. The vision is for an appointed time; in the end it will approach and bring the blessing. Though it tarry, let him wait for it. "The

Sabbath" was, in the days of his flesh, a favourite time with the Saviour to accomplish his miracles. Such it remains. In his temples may I continue waiting,

"Till he the troubled waters move,
And minister his healing love."

THE DECREES OF GOD CONSISTENT WITH HUMAN LIBERTY.

The great objection which is made to the decree or plan of God, arises from the supposition that it interferes with the liberty of human actions, and consequently takes away accountableness from man. To solve this difficulty altogether, and search it to the bottom, would be to penetrate the deep things of God, and fully trace the footsteps of the Omniscient. But though we pretend not to show the very point and manner, in which the decrees of God and the liberty of man meet together; yet a careful observation of the various methods by which God executes his purposes in the creation, will shed much light on the subject. It will afford proof, that it is a very easy thing with perfect wisdom, so to accommodate to our nature the eternal counsels, as to admit of perfect freedom in our actions. The difficulty alluded to, rests on the opinion that God must, in the execution of his plan, deal in the same method with every part of his works, and that this universal method must be necessity and constraint. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is evident to our judgment, and in a measure to our very senses, that God, so far from carrying on the great plan of providence by one uniform method of procedure, does, on the contrary, observe a variety; and that this variety is precisely adapted to the different orders of creation. In the inanimate, the vegetable, the animal, and rational creation, God carries on his first and fixed plan; but in each of these the execution of the plan is different, and accommodated to the different subject. The inanimate creation, is obedient to the law of necessity. Possessing neither reason, nor instinct, nor plastic nature, it can feel no influence, but that of the immediate and operative will of God. It can assume no form, but that which it immediately receives from his power. "God said let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." "He hath also established them for ever, and ever: he hath made a decree which they shall not pass." Thus the

inanimate part of creation is subject to necessity. It is the only law which is suited to inert matter. But when we observe the vegetable creation, we find a law in force quite different in its nature from that which regulates his purposes with regard to seas and mountains. The trees and plants were created by the same command which produced air, and earth, and water. But after they were created, they received from their Creator such a law as was correspondent to their nature and his intentions with regard to them. They were then no more under the same law of necessity. The earth brings forth the herb having seed in itself. This is the nature of the decree with regard to the herb. The seed swells, sprouts, and begins to assume the form of herb or shrub, and grows gradually up to maturity. Though the plant is destitute of the power of motion, yet its nature is quite different from that of the earth or water, and therefore we see it fulfilling the decree of God in a very different manner. If we now advance to animals, and take a view of their existence, we shall discover the decree or appointment of God, taking place in them, in a manner altogether unlike to either of the former. In matter inanimate, the divine power immediately impressed, fulfilled the decree of God. In the vegetable, the plastic power is used instrumentally to fulfil his purposes. In the animal creation, the instinctive power exerts itself to execute the great arrangements of the Creator. Amidst the variety of creatures which fill the world, it has pleased the Creator to form some of such a constitution, that it is requisite for their happiness or preservation to change their climate every year at stated times. "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming." All this is according to the fixed purpose of God. Their times and places being marked out for them, are well observed, and regularly resorted to. Thus the decrees of God, are fulfilled in the crane and swallow. By what influence do they go and come precisely at the proper time? Not by such powers as carry on the trees to perfection. These are not equal to the effect. Not by necessity. Their actions indicate something very different from this. It is evidently by some exertion of divine influence, which unfolds itself in a way adapted to their state of being, and the counsels of the Creator. Let us

now advance to man, who is endowed with a superior nature, and distinct from either of the former. In his animal nature he partakes indeed of the instinctive principle. But he adds to and combines with this the faculties of reason and conscience, and hence he becomes an accountable being. We presume therefore, that the great scheme of providence, so far as concerns man, can be and is carried on, in strict conformity with his nature and destiny. We could expect no less from the infinite wisdom of God, than that he should be able to adapt the execution of his decrees to the various grades of his creatures. What our reason teaches, fact evinces, with regard to the various orders of beings inferior to man. And how then can we doubt the existence of a law with regard to man, which operates upon him, without violating his liberty and accountableness. Without pretending fully to understand any of the methods of operation which have been mentioned, we distinctly see that God does by diverse means carry on his purposes without resorting to constraint. And when we see a diversity of influences by which he executes his pleasure, we may easily admit, nay we are compelled to admit, that God hath a method of carrying on his purposes, which is suited to freedom and accountableness.

THE STYLE OF THE BIBLE.

The argument derived from the style of the word of God, and frequently urged by divines in favour of its authenticity, is seldom pressed on the public mind with all the force it can furnish. Two things appear desirable in a revelation from heaven; first, that its language be so simple, that the most unlettered may comprehend the sentiments it reveals; and secondly, that it possess a character of sublimity, that may bespeak its infinite Author. It might appear impossible that these apparent opposites could in the same composition unite, and yet infinite wisdom and mercy has produced the blessed association. Enter the retired chambers of a Locke, a Newton and an Edwards; their bible lies before them, and opens to their view ideas too vast to be wielded by their prodigious powers. From them, pass into the school room, where children are taught their letters, and observe with astonishment and gratitude that the New Testament, or selections from it in a "Reading Made Easy" is universally acknowledged the most simple and elementary book a child can peruse. Most of the sublimest pas-

sages in the sacred writings, both in the original Hebrew and the English translation, are expressed in words of common use and for the most part monosyllables. The following passage from a fine writer of the last century, in which the stile and lofty sentiments of the bible are contrasted with the productions of profane historians and poets, will be perused with pleasure by every reader of piety and taste.

"There are two sorts of eloquence, the one indeed scarce deserves the name of it, which consists chiefly in laboured and polished periods, an over curious and artificial arrangement of figures, tinseled over with a gaudy embellishment of words, which glitter, but convey little or no light to the understanding. This kind of writing is for the most part much affected and admired by people of weak judgment and vicious taste, but it is a piece of affectation and formality the sacred writers are utter strangers to. It is a vain and boyish eloquence, and it has always been esteemed below the great geniuses of all ages, so much more so, with respect to those writers who were actuated by the spirit of infinite wisdom, and therefore wrote with that force and majesty with which never man wrote. The other sort of eloquence is quite the reverse to this, and which may be said to be the true characteristic of the holy scriptures; where the excellence does not arise from a laboured and far-fetched elocution, but from a surprising mixture of simplicity and majesty, which is a double character, so difficult to be united, that it is seldom to be met with in compositions merely human. We see nothing in holy writ of affectation and superfluous ornament. As the infinite wise Being has condescended to stoop to our language, thereby to convey to us the light of revelation, so has he been pleased graciously to accommodate it to us with the most natural and graceful plainness it would admit of. Now, it is observable, that the most excellent profane authors, whether Greek or Latin, lose most of their graces whenever we find them literally translated. Homer's famed representation of Jupiter, in his first book; his cried-up description of a tempest; his relation of Neptune's shaking the earth, and opening it to its centre; his description of Pallas's horses, with numbers of other long-since admired passages, flag, and almost vanish away, in the vulgar Latin translation.

"Let any one but take the pains to read the common Latin interpretation of Virgil, Theocritus, or even of Pindar, and one may venture to affirm he will be able to trace out few remains of the graces which charmed him so much in the original. The natural conclusion from hence is, that in the classical authors, the expression, the sweetness of the numbers, occasioned by a musical placing of words, constitute a great part of their beauties; whereas, in the sacred writings, they consist more in the greatness of the things themselves, than in the words and expressions. The ideas and conceptions are so great and lofty in their own nature, that they necessarily appear magnificent in the most artless dress. Look but into the bible, and we see them shine through the most simple and literal translations. That glorious description which Moses gives of the creation of the heavens and the earth, which Longinus, the best critic the eastern world ever produced, was so justly taken with, has not lost the least whit of its intrinsic worth; and though it hath undergone so many translations, yet it triumphs over all, and breaks forth with as much force and vehemence as in the original. Of this stamp are numbers of passages throughout the scriptures; instance that celebrated description of a tempest in the hundred and seventh psalm; those beautiful reflections of holy Job upon the shortness of life, and instability of human affairs; that lively description of a horse of war, in the thirty-ninth chapter of Job, in which, from the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth verse, there is scarce a word which does not merit a particular explication to display the beauties of it. I might add to these, those tender and pathetic expostulations with the children of Israel which run throughout all the prophets, which the most uncritical reader can scarce help being affected with.

"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done? wherefore, when I expected that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes! and yet, ye say, the way of the Lord is unequal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal? are not yours unequal? have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live? I have nourished and brought up children; and they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people

doth not consider." There is nothing in all the eloquence of the heathen world comparable to the vivacity and tenderness of these reproaches; there is something in them so thoroughly affecting, and so noble and sublime withal, that one might challenge the writings of the most celebrated orators of antiquity to produce any thing like them. These observations upon the superiority of the inspired penmen to heathen ones, in that which regards the composition more conspicuously, hold good when they are considered upon the foot of historians. Not to mention, that profane histories give an account only of human achievements and temporal events, which for the most part, are so full of uncertainty and contradictions, that we are at a loss where to seek for truth; but that the sacred history of God himself, the history of his omnipotence and infinite wisdom, his universal providence, his justice and mercy, and all his other attributes, displayed under a thousand different forms, by a series of the most various and wonderful events that ever happened to any nation, or language: not to insist upon this visible superiority in sacred history, there is yet another undoubted excellence the profane historians seldom arrive at, which is almost the distinguishing character of the sacred ones; namely, that unaffected, artless manner of relating historical facts, which is so entirely of a piece with every other part of the holy writings. What I mean will be best made out by a few instances. In the history of Joseph, (which certainly is told with the greatest variety of beautiful and affecting circumstances,) when Joseph makes himself known, and weeps aloud upon the neck of his dear brother Benjamin, that all the house of Pharaoh heard him; at that instant, none of his brethren are introduced as uttering any thing, either to express their present joy, or palliate their former injuries to him. On all sides, there immediately ensues a deep and solemn silence; a silence infinitely more eloquent and expressive than any that could have been substituted in its place. Had Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, or any of the celebrated classical historians, been employed in writing this history, when they came to this point, they would, doubtless, have exhausted all their fund of eloquence in furnishing Joseph's brethren with laboured and studied harangues; which, however fine they might have been in themselves, would nevertheless have been unnatural, and altogether improper on the occasion. For when such a variety of contrary passions broke in upon

them, what tongue was able to utter their hurried and distracted thoughts? When remorse, surprise, shame, joy, and gratitude, struggled together in their bosoms, how uneloquently would their lips have performed their duty? how unfaithfully their tongues have spoken the language of their hearts? In this case, silence was truly eloquent and natural, and tears expressed what oratory was incapable of."

Mr. Editor,

Sir,

In the last number of your Intelligencer, I observe some queries which a correspondent is desirous of having answered. I take the liberty of sending you the following communication relative to two of them, which you are at liberty to publish or suppress as you please. I am yours, truly. H.

See page 19, No. I.—" In 1 Samuel, xvi. 19—22. We read that Saul sent to Jesse for his son David; the stripling came and stood before him: Saul 'loved him greatly,' and made him his 'armour-bearer.' A second time he sent for him, saying to his father, 'Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.' Yet after his victory over Goliath, Saul asks, as if quite unacquainted with him, 'Whose son art thou, thou young man?'"

I suppose your correspondent, although he has not here expressly instituted a query, means to be understood, that he wishes these apparently contradictory texts reconciled. The following illustration from the annotations of Poole on the passages, to me appears amply satisfactory.

" How could David be unknown to Saul with whom he had lived? Answer. That might well be for divers reasons; because David was not constantly with him, nor, as it seems, employed by him but upon *extraordinary* occasions and desperate fits of melancholy; from which, possibly, he had been free a good while, by God's special providence and care for his people Israel: that so, he might be able to govern and protect them against the Philistines, who watched all opportunities against them, and at last broke forth into an open war. Thus David had been, for some considerable time, dismissed from Saul's court and was returned home, and therefore it is not strange, if Saul had for the present

forgotten David; for kings, because of the incumbrance of public business, and the multitude of persons who come to them on several occasions, may easily forget some persons; yea, such as have frequently been with them, especially their servants, whom they do not use to observe with so much attention and care as they do others. Add to this, that the distemper of Saul's mind might make him forgetful, and that David might now be much changed, both in his countenance and his habit, from what he had been before. [David might have visited the king in the gay habit of a musician, whereas, he left the flocks of his father and ran to his brethren, probably in the dress of a shepherd.] It is apparent that the change of habit makes so great a difference, that it often keeps us from the knowledge of those persons whom, in other attire, we very well know." Dr. Scott observes, that "kings, especially such as Saul, are served by so many fresh faces, that they *literally forget* their old acquaintances." "Yet," he adds, "it is evident, Saul had some confused and imperfect recollection of David, though he could not certainly remember *whose son he was.*"

Page 20.—"Are there any proofs to be drawn from the word of God, that the seats in heaven, vacated by the fall of angels, shall be filled by the ransomed of the Lord?"

If the machinery of the "Paradise Lost" were proof, we must answer in the affirmative. It was with Milton a favourite idea that

"The universal Maker ——————
"—— justly hath driven out his rebel foes,
"To deepest hell and to *repair* that *loss*,
"Created this new, happy race of men,
"To serve him better!"—

President Edwards, in his posthumous sermon on the wisdom of God displayed in the way of salvation, conveys a similar thought. He says, "the angels rejoice that others are added to "join them, and assist them in praising God. The *vacancy* by "the fall of angels is filled up." Dr. Owen, in his exposition on Heb. ix. seems to have in his view such an idea. He observes, "Sin had entered into heaven itself in the apostacy of angels; "whence it was *not pure in the sight of God.*" Job. xv. 15.— "And, upon the sin of man, a state of enmity ensued between "the angels above and the men below; so that heaven was no fit

" habitation for them both, until they were reconciled, which was " done only in the sacrifice of Christ." Eph. i. 10. I have met with no author who dwells more directly upon the point, than John Bunyan in his Temple Spiritualized. These are his words. " The cherubims and palm trees (in Ezekiel xli. 17—20.) are " figures of the holy angels and of upright ones. Mark! here's a " palm tree, and there a cherub: here we are a little lower than " the angels, but there we shall not be a whit behind the very " chief of them. A palm tree and a cherub—an upright one be- " tween the cherubs will then be round about the house. We " shall be placed in the *same rank; neither can they die any more,* " *for they are equal to the angels,*" Luke xx. 36. " The elect of " God shall there take up the *vacancies* of the fallen angels; they " for sin were cast down from the holy heavens, and we by grace " shall be caught up thither, and be placed between a cherub and " a cherub. The elect take that place in possession, but a better " crown for ever. Thus Israel possessed that of the Canaanites, " and David Saul's kingdom, and Matthias the apostleship of " Judas. You see they were placed from the ground up to above " the door; that is, from the lowest to the highest angel there. " For as there are great saints and small ones in the church on " earth, so there are angels of divers degrees in heaven, some " greater than some, but the smallest saint when he gets to " heaven, shall have an angel's dignity—an angel's place. From " the *ground* you find a *palm tree between a cherub and a cherub.*"

The reader will attach what importance may to him seem proper, to this explication of the ingenious Bunyan, and to the sentiments of the other great men from whom quotations are made. To me, the sentiment appears more the child of fancy than the offspring of revelation. Besides, that the representation seems too much to connect the idea of locality with the heavenly state, it is manifest from the book of the revelations of John, that the angels and the redeemed raise their anthems in separate, though affectionate bands. That the number of the saved answers precisely to the number of devils, cannot, I think, be soberly drawn from any part of the word of God. It is best to believe that the justice of God shall be glorified in the destruction of Satan and his angels, as truly as shall his mercy in the salvation of his chosen; and to answer inquiries which relate to number, as did our Lord himself, " Strive to enter in at the straight gate."

MASQUERADES.*

AN ANSWER TO SOME INQUIRIES.

1. WHAT is the most probable method of circulating the impurities of European morals among us?

Masquerades.

2. What are the resorts where the powers of darkness may hope, most effectually, to seduce and ruin the mind of youth?

Masquerades.

3. What ought to alarm the jealousy of every godly parent?

Masquerades.

4. From what will a virtuous female fly with disgust and horror?

Masquerades.

5. On what ought a legislature, the guardian of public morals, as well as of liberty, property, and life, decidedly to frown?

On Masquerades.

6. What are the mediums of intrigue and infamy?

Masquerades.

7. Where may a deceiver, a hypocrite, or a devil, be said to appear in his true character?

At Masquerades.

8. Which is one of the most direct roads to "devouring fire and everlasting burnings."

Masquerades.

O.

MR. EDITOR,

I LEARN with pleasure, that a society is formed, and means are in operation in this city, for the relief of those penitent females, who wish to fly the chambers of pollution and death. In imitation of European institutions, I observe the term "Magdalen" is employed to intimate the design of the establishment. I wish some of your correspondents would point to any passages in the New Testament which fairly imply that Mary Magdalene was ever a person of unchaste morals. The measure, sir, will oblige, Your's very respectfully,

A FOE TO DEFAMATION.

* Into Philadelphia these iniquitous amusements have been lately introduced.

MISCELLANY, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

A LETTER TO DR. WATTS.

Valuable and unrivalled as are the pious composures of Dr. Watts, it is said, that such was his modesty and mean idea of his own productions that it was not without considerable effort, on the part of his friends, he could be prevailed upon to publish them. The subjoined is a letter on the subject addressed to him by his own brother.

Southampton, March, 1700.

DEAR BROTHER,

In your last, you discovered an inclination to oblige the world by showing it your hymns in print; and I heartily wish, as well for the satisfaction of the public as myself, that you were something more than inclinable thereunto. I have frequently importuned you to it, before now, and your invention as often furnished you with some modest reply to the contrary, as if what I urged was only the effect of a rash and inconsiderate fondness to a brother: but you will have other thoughts of the matter, when I first assure you that that affection, which is inseparable from our near relationship, would have had in me a very different operation; for, instead of pressing you to publish, I should with my last efforts have endeavoured the concealment of them, if my best judgment did not direct me to believe it highly conducing to a general benefit, without the least particular disadvantage to yourself; this latter I need not have mentioned, for I am very confident, whoever has the happiness of reading your hymns, (unless he be either sot or atheist), will have a very favourable opinion of their author, so that at the same time you contribute to the universal advantage, you will procure the esteem of men the most judicious and sensible.

In the second place, you may please to consider, how very mean the performers in this kind of poetry appear in the pieces already extant. Some ancient ones I have seen in my time, who flourished in Hopkins' and Sternhold's reign, but Mason now reduces this kind of writing to a sort of yawning indifferency, and honest Barton chimes us asleep. There is, therefore, great need of a piece, vigorous and lively as yours, to quicken and revive

the dying devotion of the age, to which nothing can afford such assistance as poetry, contrived on purpose to elevate us even above ourselves. To what may we impute the prevalency of the songs, filled with the fabulous divinity of the ancient fathers, on our passions? Is it, think you, only owing to a natural propensity in us to be in love with fable, and averse to truth in her native plainness? I presume it may partly be ascribed to this, that as romance has really more need of artifice than truth to set it off, so it generally has such an abundance more, that it seldom fails of affecting us, by making new and agreeable impressions. Yours now is the old truth, stripped of its ragged ornaments, and appears, if we may say so, younger by ages in a new and fashionable dress, which is commonly tempting.

And as for those modern gentlemen, who have lately exhibited their version of the psalms; all of them I have not seen I confess; and perhaps it would not be worth while to do it, unless I had a mind to play the critic, which you know is not my talent; but those I have read, confess to me a vast deference to yours, though they are not done by persons of mean credit. Dr. Patrick most certainly has the report of a very learned man, and, they say, understands the Hebrew extremely well, which indeed capacitates him for a translator; but he is thereby never the more enabled to versify. Tate and Brady still keep near the same pace; I know not what sober beast they ride (one that will be content to carry double) but I am sure it is no Pegasus; there is in them a mighty deficiency of that life and soul, which is necessary to raise our fancies, and kindle and fire our passions; and something or other they have to allege against the rest of adventurers; but I have been persuaded a great while since, that were David to speak English, he would chuse to make use of your style. If what I have said seems to have no weight with you, yet you cannot be ignorant what a load of scandal lies on the dissenters, only for their imagined aversion to poetry. You remember what Dr. Speed says:—

> So far hath schism prevailed, they hate to see
> Our lines and words in couplings to agree,
> It looks too like abhorr'd conformity:
> A hymn, so soft, so smooth, so neatly dress'd,
> Savours of human learning and the beast.

Now, when your hymns are exposed to the public view, these calumnies will immediately vanish, which, methinks, should be

a motive not the least considerable. And now we are talking of music, I have a crotchet in my brain, which makes me imagine that, as cords and discords equally please heavy-eared people, so the best divine poems will no more inspire the rude and illiterate than the meanest rhymes, which may in some measure give you satisfaction in that fear you discover, *ne in rude vulgus cadant*, and you must allow them to be tasteless to many people, tolerable to some, but to those few who know their beauties, to be very pleasant and desirable: and lastly, if I do not speak reason, I will at present take my leave of you, and only desire you to hear what your ingenious acquaintance at London say to the point; for I doubt not you have many solicitors there, whose judgments are much more solid than mine. I pray God Almighty have you in his good keeping, and desire you to believe me, my dear brother, your most affectionate kinsman and friend.

ENOCH WATTS.

FRAGMENTS.

THAT they should seek the Lord, if haply they might FEEL *after him*, Acts, xvii. 27. The word ψηλαφησειαν, rendered *feel*, in our translation signifies (conari tangere, et manu vestigare, cæcorum instar) to endeavour to touch, and to trace with the hand, after the manner of the blind. Mr. Henry on the passage observes, that "Pythagoras said, 'Men have a sort of divine nature;' and Heraclitus being asked what men were, answered that they were mortal gods; and what the gods were, answered, that they were immortal men; and Pindar says, God and man are near akin. It is true," adds our author, "by the knowledge of ourselves, we may be led to the knowledge of God, but it is a very confused knowledge; this is but *feeling* after him.

A more striking exemplification of *feeling* after God perhaps cannot be given, than in the following quotation from a Hindoo Veda. Bruhma the creator is called Soul or intellect.

"What is this Soul that we may worship him? Which is this Soul? Is it that by which a man sees? by which he hears? by which he smells odours? by which he utters speech? Is it the heart? or the will? Is it sensation? or power? or discrimination? or comprehension? or perception, or retention? or application? or haste? or pain? or memory? or assent? or determination? or animal action? or wish? or desire?"

It is added, "these idols are he; earth, air, the ethereal fluid, water, and light;" these are he! Poor Hindoo, our prayers shall ascend for thee! The missionaries of Jesus shall point thee to "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth."

Mr. Vincent, in a most forcible manner, describes as follows the labours of the faithful ministers of Christ, during the plague in London.

"Now they are preaching, and every sermon is unto them as if they were preaching the last. Old Time seems stationed at the head of the pulpit with his great scythe, crying with a hoarse voice, *Work, while it is called to-day;* at *night, I will cut thee down.* At the side of the pulpit, grim death seems to stand with his full quiver, and says, *Do thou shoot God's arrows, and I will shoot mine.* The grave lies open at the pulpit's foot, and showing her dusty bosom, exclaims,

Louden thy cry, to God, to men,
And now fulfil thy trust;
Here thou must lie, mouth stopp'd, breath gone,
And silent in the dust.

LIKENESSES.

"And he said unto her, what form is he of?" 1 Sam. xxviii. 14.

MARTIN LUTHER.

He was of a common stature, his body was robust. His eyes discovered a vivacity so piercing, that few could look upon him directly, when he fixed his glance upon them. His voice was soft but not clear. He wore his own hair in the simplest mode, and was usually seen in a cloak edged with ermine. Beza wrote an epigram on Luther, closing with this point ——

Go, fabling Greece, and bid Alcides know,
His club as Luther's pen, gave no such blow.

JOHN BUNYAN.

He was tall and broad set, though not corpulent; he had a ruddy complexion, with sparkling eyes, and hair inclining to red, but in his old age sprinkled with gray. His whole appear-

ance was plain, and his dress unaffected and simple. His countenance was grave and sedate, and discovered such a serious frame of heart, as struck awe upon the carnal and irreligious.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

He was rather above the middle stature, extremely thin and slender. His deportment in company was strikingly polite, affable and agreeable. In conversation he greatly excelled; his discourse being at once instructive and entertaining, and not unfrequently rising to the splendid. Dr. Kippis says "he was not only a great man, but one of the most excellent and useful christians, and christian ministers that ever existed."

GEORGE WISHART,

Or, as Buchanan translates the name, Georgius Sophocardus, George Wiseheart, was tall of stature. He had black hair; a long beard; his person was comely, and his address courteous. He wore a frieze gown, a black fustian doublet, plain hose, and shirt of coarse canvas. Every few weeks or months, he would give his chief apparel to the poor, excepting his french cap, which he always kept a twelvemonth. He was a most famous and successful preacher of the gospel in Scotland, and was blessed with many seals to his ministry.

JEROM OF PRAGUE

Possessed a countenance discovering unusual firmness. He was a superior orator. His voice was clear, distinct and full; his action every way proper to express indignation, or to awaken pity. Poggius, an enemy to his principles, says "the greatest character in ancient story could not possibly go beyond him. If there is any justice in history, this man will be admired by all posterity." With a cheerful countenance he met his fate. When bound to the stake with wet cords and an iron chain, observing the executioner about to set fire to the wood behind his back, he cried out, "Bring thy torch hither; perform thy office before my face; had I feared death, I could have avoided it."

GEORGE WHITFIELD.

His person was manly, and grew large as he advanced in years. His manner was often graceful and highly rhetorical;

though a cast in his eye, strongly marked, prevented the vivid impression which that organ is peculiarly suited to make; yet no man with such a disadvantage, ever looked with stronger sensibility; after a second hearing, the defect was forgotten. His voice was remarkably musical, and capable of the most various intonations. He had arrows in his quiver, that only himself knew how to sharpen. His labours in both hemispheres were immense, his courage undaunted, and his zeal not to be extinguished; he fell a martyr to his work.

DR. ISAAC BARROW

Was of the lesser size and lean; in his strength extraordinary, in complexion fair and calm. His eyes gray, clear and short-sighted; his hair of a light auburn, very fine and curling. He is well represented by the figure of Marcus Brutus on his denarii. What Cowley has asserted of Marcus, may be well applied to Dr. Barrow.

" Virtue was thy life's centre, and from thence
Did silently and constantly dispense
The gentle vigorous influence
To all the wide and fair circumference."

DR. JOHN OWEN.

His stature was tall, his visage grave, majestic and comely. His features finely proportioned. His complexion somewhat dark. His epitaph informs us that

" While on the road to heaven,
His elevated mind,
Almost comprehended
Its full glories and joys.
When he was consulted on cases of conscience,
His resolutions contained
THE WISDOM OF AN ORACLE."

ANECDOTES.

ARISTIPPUS the Socratic philosopher was accustomed to say, that " *Parents should possess their children of such valuables as might escape with them from a shipwreck.*" Stilpon, another phi-

losopher, when the city in which he lived was sacked by Demetrius, being asked what loss he had sustained, answered, "*None; I carry my all with me.*" To each of these circumstances Dr. Doddridge delicately alludes in one of his hymns.

Engage this roving treach'rous heart,
To fix on Mary's better part;
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away.
Then let the wildest storms arise;
Let tempests mingle earth and skies;
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,
But *all my treasures with me bear.*

NATHANIEL BRADSHAW, B. D. of Trinity College, Cambridge, ejected from his living at Willingham, for his conscientious adherence to evangelical truth, was succeeded by a profane minister, whose name was Nailor. Dr. Bradshaw was interred in Willingham church. When the sexton was digging the grave for Nailor, a person, who was looking on, exclaimed, "Why do you bury him so near that fanatic?" An aged person, who was present, and who knew their different characters, shrewdly answered, "*It cannot affect them while they lie here, and they may be* FAR ENOUGH OFF at the Resurrection."

Mr. THOMAS GOLDHAM was an able preacher of Christ in the county of Sussex in England, about the middle of the sixteenth century. Soon after his entrance on the ministry, he was disturbed by a tall, thin, plain man of mystic sentiments, who came to his church as he was preaching, and walking, like a ghost, towards the pulpit, cried out, "I have a message from God to thee." Mr. Goldham, who was a person of uncommon readiness of mind, asked, "What! to me?" "Yea," said the mystic, "to thee." "Dost thou know my name?" said Mr. Goldham. "Nay," replied the man, "I know thee not." Mr. G. answered, "If God had sent thee to me he could have told thee my name," arguing the great possibility that he was quite mistaken in the person he was sent to. The man was confounded, and the people pleased.

THE great John Howe of Oxford, was at dinner with a certain nobleman, who treated Mr. Howe with great respect, and requested him to say in what manner he could effectually serve

him, strengthening his protestations of zeal, with a multitude of profane oaths. Mr. Howe replied, "There is one favour which I should be happy your lordship would grant me." "My good Mr. Howe," replied the nobleman impatiently, with another oath, "there is nothing Mr. Howe can ask but it will make me happy to grant." On which Mr. Howe calmly said, "The only favour, my lord, which I have to beg of you is that your lordship will give me leave to swear the next oath."

Mr. Howe married the daughter of the Rev. George Hughes of Plymouth. He was accustomed to carry on a weekly correspondence with his father-in-law in Latin. One evening, Mr. Howe's house caught fire, and would probably have been reduced to ashes, if it had not been extinguished by a heavy shower. On that very day, Mr. Howe had received a letter from Mr. Hughes, ending with this beautiful prayer: Sit ros cæli super habitaculum vestrum. Let the dew of heaven be upon your dwelling.

The excellent Mr. Flavel, on a voyage from Dartmouth to London, whither he fled from the cruel persecutions of the mayor of Dartmouth, was overtaken in a storm. The vessel was driven so near some dangerous rocks, that both the master and seamen concluded, that if the wind did not quickly change, they must of necessity be wrecked. While circumstances were thus perilous, Mr. F. called all that could be spared into the cabin to prayer, and commended himself and them to God. Scarcely had he closed his supplication, when one came down shouting "Deliverance! deliverance! God is a God hearing prayer; the wind has changed."

THE BOY AND THE CUBES.

President Edwards relates of himself the following anecdote. See Posthumous Works, Vol. I. p. 38.

I once told a boy, of about thirteen years of age, that a piece of any matter, of two inches square, was eight times as large as a piece of one inch square. He seemed at first not to believe I was in earnest. But when I had taken pains to convince him that I knew what I said to be true, he appeared astonished I was so positive, and would argue, how is it possible for two inches to be eight inches? It seemed to him as evident a contradiction, as, that that which

was twice so long, and twice so broad, and twice so thick, should be eight times as large; or that twice one should make eight, or any other absurdity whatever. When I afterwards demonstrated the truth of it by cutting out two cubes, one an inch, the other two inches square, and then cut the two inch cube into eight equal parts, he counted them over and over; he seemed as astonished as though there had been some witchcraft in the case, and could hardly believe it, for he was a stranger to the reason.

"I believe," adds that great man, "that it was a much more difficult mystery to him, than the trinity ordinarily is found to a penetrating mind. It seemed more palpably contradictory than any doctrine of our religion to the socinian or deist. And why should we not suppose, that there are some ideas that may be true, which are as far above our understandings, and as difficult to them, as this truth was to the boy? Doubtless there is a vastly greater difference between our understanding and God's, than between this boy's and the intellect of the greatest philosopher, mathematician, or divine!"

Much has been said, volumes have been written, controversies in the church have frequently been held to determine the boundaries between faith and reason, and perhaps the limit as yet remains undefined. This we know, that there are some truths of revelation which are discoverable by reason, such for instance is the existence of a God. As we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, so we know that nothing could never produce something; but as from ourselves and from the wide creation we know there is *real being*, it is manifest that from eternity there has been something; for what was not from eternity had a beginning, and whatever had a beginning must have been produced from something beyond itself. We are therefore constrained to confess the existence of an eternal First Cause, the grand source of *universal* being; but this idea is a part of revelation as well as the result of serious reasonings. There are many subjects of which we have either no ideas or very imperfect ones; but these being clearly revealed, how much soever they may be beyond the present flight of human reason, are proper subjects of christian and temperate faith.

To object against divine revelation because of its mysteriousness is highly absurd. It is reasonable to suppose that a representation of the acts, the nature and the designs of God, the state of the invisible world, and the true interests of immortal

spirits, should have in it many things too deep for the line of human reason to fathom. What is the world around us but a mass of mysteries? So contracted is the mind of man, so immense are the works of God, that there is not a star that glitters in the heavens, but has a lustre sufficiently powerful to dazzle and confound the reasonings of man; not an insect is seen floating, with gilded wing in the evening air, but has mysteries in its formation too deep for the tallest thoughts to trace.

A thousand questions might be proposed respecting the melted sap in the tree, the motion of the blood in the veins, and the roll of the tides from continent to continent, which neither a Linnæus, a Harvey, nor a Newton could answer. But how unreasonable is it to suppose that while nature all around is mystery, the system of salvation should suggest no idea which the most feeble intellect is not able to wield. We say, the most feeble intellect, for supposing that the sublime mysteries of the christian system could be comprehended by a human understanding improved and learned, the mind unaccustomed to the combination of ideas must feel and utter the difficulties, of which the most vigorous intellect may now complain.

It is the delight of God to confound the wisdom of the wise. The solicitudes of the plainer christian usually arise from a nobler source. He is distressed not for want of confidence in the revelation of his God, but for the absence of his lovely countenance. He weeps, because he possesses no stronger evidence of interest in his favour, or because his life so little promotes the honour of his Saviour's name. But the mind that will drop the faith of the saints that it may grasp the dissevered links of its own carnal reasonings finds its punishment in its miseries.

When tempted to disbelieve any doctrine of christianity because of its mysteriousness, remembering that reason is frail, that we are surrounded with inconceivables, that the scriptures are proved by the most forcible arguments to be a revelation from God himself, and that it is reasonable to conclude that it is in compassion to the weakness of our powers, that greater obscurity presents not itself to our view, as a soldier of Christ, it is the duty and honour of the saint to fight the good fight of faith. Knowledge is the life of the soul. Far from occasioning a revolt of the mind, it should excite our transport, that in redemption infinite wisdom has prepared heights and depths and lengths and breadths for our perpetual range and entertainment.

THE FATHERS.

In the sacred writings, the name of *Fathers* is given to the ancient elders and prophets of the Jewish church. In the christian world it is employed in allusion to the more early apologists and martyrs for the cause of the Redeemer. As reference is often heard, in discourses from the pulpit, to their writings and characters, the subsequent statement taken from the "Ecclesiastes" of Bishop Wilkins, it is presumed will be acceptable, especially to our youthful readers.

"The ancient Fathers are usually reckoned up according to the centuries in which they lived.

The first century.

Clemens Romanus,
Ignatius,
Dionysius Areopagita,
Polycarp.

The second century.

Justin Martyr,
Athenagoras,
Irenæus.

The third century.

Tertullian,
Theophilus Antiochinus,
Clemens Alexandrinus,
Origen,
Gregorius Thaumatergus,
Cyprian,
Arnobius,
Lactantius.

The fourth century.

Eusebius Cesariensis,
Athanasius,
Hilarius,
Cyril,
Basil,
Gregory Nazianzen,
Epiphanius,
Ambrose,
Gregorius Nyssenus,
Theodoret,
Hieronymus,
Chrysostom.

The fifth century.

Augustine,
Cyril of Alexandria,
Chrysologus,
Salvian,
Prosper,
Fulgentius.

The sixth and seventh centuries.

Gregory the Great.

The eighth century.

Beda,
Damascenus.

The ninth century.

Nicephorus.

The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.

Theophylact,
Anselm,
Bernard,
Peter Lombard.

There are a few others who are called lesser fathers, but the above are the principal."

The characters of some of the most eminent are thus drawn by Erasmus:

Basil is luminous, pious, sound, sweetly grave, and gravely sweet, employing no exuberance of words.

Athanasius in teaching is wonderful.

The writings of Chrysostom are popular, and accommodated to the ears and affections of the uneducated multitude.

In Gregory Nazianzen there is much quickness of intellect, and a sufficient vehemence.

Tertullian is unpolished, yet keen in confuting heretics, and severe in exposing vices.

Cyprian is open, vehement, serious and pleasingly fluent.

The sentences of Ambrose are shrewd, affected, and often very obscure.

Hieronymus is apt at every kind of writing, and ardent in exciting the affections.

Augustine is happy and eloquent in unpremeditated composition, but he is rather pleasing than profound.

Prudentius breathes much of christian eloquence.

Bernard is cheerful, and prompt in awakening the passions.

ENVY MISPLACED.

The temptation of Asaph to envy the prosperity of the wicked, in a greater or less degree, assaults the faith of every saint. No better remedy against its influence can be suggested than that which relieved the psalmist. *Go to the sanctuary of the Lord and consider their end!* How fearful the description of the state and prospect of the sinners who, "set their mouth against the heavens," the divine spirit in his sanctuary instructed his servant to paint.—See psalm 73, 18. 19. "Surely thou didst set "them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruc- "tion. How are they brought into desolation, in a moment, they "are utterly consumed with terrors."

Mr. Coxe, in his travels through Switzerland, states some circumstances which may assist our conception of the wicked man's real situation. He observes that, in travelling over the gla-

ciers, himself and his associates had each a pole spiked with iron to prevent their slipping; chasms in some places amid the vast valleys of ice presenting themselves which, from the time large stones were in reaching the bottom, were calculated to be at least five hundred feet deep. Some gentlemen, who made an unsuccessful effort to reach the summit of Mount Blanc, he informs us, were returning in great haste, the day being far spent, when one of the party slipped in an attempt to leap over a chasm of ice. He held in his hand a long pole spiked with iron, which he struck into the ice, and upon this he hung dreadfully suspended for a few moments, till he was relieved by his companions.

In the Chaldee translation the words "slippery places" are rendered "in the dark." Combine these ideas; see yonder the haughty transgressor, he is on a slippery eminence, it is darkness all around....He falls....in a moment he is in destruction.... and with terrors is utterly consumed!

OBITUARY.

Memoirs of Mr. John Biss, late one of the missionaries of Serampore, who died on his way from India to America.

> "Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
> So sinks the day star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
> Through the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves."
>
> Milton.

Mr. John Biss was born in the town of Uffculm in the county of Devon in England, on the 10th of January, 1776. In his early life he had frequent convictions of the depravity of his heart, and of the guilt he had incurred while yet a child. With opening years, and amid the follies of youth they wore off. No permanent religious impressions appear to have been felt, until he attained the age of nineteen. The following narration of his exercises relative to his becoming a missionary is taken, in substance, from

a manuscript of his own; it is without date, but was probably written about the close of 1798, or the commencement of the year ensuing. It appears to be a copy of the detail of his experience, written, to be presented to the mission society.

"Nearly two years ago, I was united to a church of Jesus Christ, in Plymouth Dock, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Birt. As often as my situation would admit, being then in the militia, I valued it as my duty and high privilege to meet with the church in their public and private assemblies, and often found it good to be there. At a public prayer meeting, established the first Monday in every month, for soliciting the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon his churches, and for the spread of his glorious gospel in our own and in foreign realms, and that he would bless his servants, who at the peril of their lives, had gone to erect the standard of the cross among bewildered heathen, I began to feel serious desires rise and increase in my heart, to become a missionary to India. Sometimes I was oppressed with the apprehension, that my thoughts on this subject were foolish and vain. I then would entreat the Lord to search me and try me; to assist me to discover whether my motives were false and selfish, or whether directed by the glory of his sacred name. If they were wrong, I entreated him to cut off every such desire. I also made it a subject of continual prayer to God, that if my exercises of spirit were consistent with his sacred will, he would increase them; stimulating me by his grace to activity in his vineyard, and opening before me, who am less than the least of his creatures, an effectual door.

"About fourteen months ago, as I was one night on sentry, I believe in the hours from ten to twelve, in a place extremely solitary, walking on my post, to and fro, while reflecting on the goodness and mercy of God towards me, my hard heart was melted down into contrition and sorrow for sin. O blessed, blessed moment! While I was musing, the fire of love to God kindled in my breast, and the candle of the Lord shone round my head. For a few moments, I was almost lost in admiration, I scarcely knew whether I was in the body or out of the body. I believe I had my Saviour's presence with me.

"During the two hours I felt myself in such a frame that I could give myself up into the hands of the Lord. While his love

was shed abroad in my heart, I said 'if thou hast any message for any place *send me*.' I thought I could go any where, or suffer any thing for Christ, seeing he had done such great things for me. My mind was particularly anxious about going to India, to join the dear brethren, in publishing the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Saviour to the poor Hindoos. On reading, soon after, that the Lord had taken several of his missionary servants, who had gone thither, to himself, my heart was filled with sorrow. Reflection, nevertheless, taught me that the Lord is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works. While pondering on these mysterious providences, O thought I, what would I give were I only capable of filling up one of their places; what would I give! did I say; I would, could I command them, relinquish ten thousand worlds, and count them but dung and dross for the inestimable privilege. 'O my dearest Jesus I long to see thy kingdom come and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; I long to see the empire of Satan in ruin and that of Jesus in power and glory. O how I long

To tell to dying sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found.'

"Ah! poor Hindoo sinners, there is every encouragement for you to come to Christ! If you are friendless, he will be a friend to you and stick closer than a brother. Are you poor? he can make you rich. He hath chosen the poor of this world to make them rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Are you blind? he can give vision. Are you lame? he can make you leap as a hart. Whatsoever necessities you deplore, he can remove them. He can supply all your need according to his riches in glory.

"Thus to recommend Christ in his lovely characters, to sinners of every description, is my heart's desire. O, methinks I could leave father and mother, brethren and sisters, wife and children, and all that is dear to my affections, could I hope to be an instrument for the conversion of a single soul. Since I have enjoyed an acquaintance with brother Marsdon, we have freely and often communicated our feelings to each other. His heart is the counter-part of my own. We have repeatedly prayed together for divine instruction. Lord, be thou our teacher! who is sufficient for these things!"

Pleased with these indications of a heart deeply engaged for the salvation of the heathen, the Mission Society encouraged Mr. Biss. He was placed for some time under the tuition of Dr. Ryland of Bristol, and in the spring of 1804, together with Mrs. Biss, and three other missionaries with their wives, arrived at New-York; from which place they sailed first to Madras, and afterwards to India. Mr. B. with considerable facility acquired the language of the natives, and his station was resolved on at Saddamal, a few miles from Dinagepoor, in the vicinity of Mr. Fernandez, senr. and between two and three hundred miles from Serampore. Mrs. Biss was actually sent to the spot to make preparations for her husband's arrival, who though already indisposed, it was hoped was not in real danger. During her absence, his affliction, which proved to be an induration of the liver, increasing, he wrote an affecting farewel letter to his wife, which in the next number of this work, we shall endeavour to introduce. With all possible rapidity she returned. It was the decided opinion of the physician and of the brethren, that for Mr. B. to continue in India, would be followed with his inevitable and speedy dissolution, and that a sea voyage would in all probability restore him. Mr. B. felt himself quite indisposed to leave Serampore, preferring a removal from thence to his heavenly house, to the uncertainties of a sea voyage. He yielded, however, to the judgment of his friends. In the Bremen, captain Singleton, he sailed for Philadelphia with Mrs. B. and four little children. The first fortnight after leaving the river his health appeared improving, but it afterwards began again to decline, and in one month from the time of his departure, on the 5th day of February, 1807, he fell asleep in the arms of that lovely Saviour, for whose sake, to "parents and friends and native land" he had been assisted with cheerfulness to bid farewel.

Our departed friend was much struck with the mysteriousness of the Providence which had called him to India, prepared him for teaching the natives, opened a door before him apparently for the purpose, and then called him from service. He requested of his afflicted partner, that, if, after his decease, a funeral sermon were delivered, it might be from the words of our Lord to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou

"shalt know hereafter." His request was complied with, both at Philadelphia and at Serampore.

In his affliction he declared he had no desire to return to England. All his anxiety was to be employed among the perishing and neglected heathen. It was his hope, that if prospects of usefulness should be obscured in India, they would open on his view in some colder clime. As his end drew near his mind became perfectly calm. His dear wife and four precious little ones, he was assisted to commend to the care of his covenant God, whom he knew to be the husband of the widow, and the father of the fatherless. He often said, "I am quite resigned—if the Lord has no work for me to do on earth, he can and will raise up others. I am willing to labour here, or to see him as he is, as he pleases."

On his dying bed he was often heard repeating or singing these lines,

Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly;
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.
Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee, &c.

He spent much of his time in prayer, and even during the occasional delirium he experienced, a little before his decease, the things of God dwelt on his lips, and seemed to engage all his powers. He expired on the day above-mentioned, about four o'clock in the morning. His remains were shortly after dropped from the side of the vessel into the deep, in hope of a joyful resurrection, when the sea shall give up the dead that therein are.

Since the arrival of Mrs. B. in America, the Lord has been pleased to take to himself one of her little ones. Her name was Mary. She was the oldest of the four. The child fell a victim to the hives. Her heavenly father has afforded her amid these tribulations his gracious supports, and enabled her to ascend the rock, while deep has been calling to deep below. She had hoped, agreeably to the recommendation of the Mission Society, to have

returned in the Pacific, a "*ship of Tarshish*," belonging to Mr. Ralston, with several other missionaries, the past fall season. National difficulties have hitherto prevented.

The saint lies dead; beneath the waiting wave,
Borne by the mariner, he finds a grave;
The wondering lispers, to their mother say,
"What makes the sailors take papa away."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Letter from the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, to the Rev. Dr. Green.

Maryville, January 2, 1808.

DEAR SIR,

A FEW days since I had an opportunity of seeing the effect of civilization on my scholars. Death had executed his commission on an old man, who was connected with some of the scholars. James M'Intosh, one of the oldest and most advanced of my school, undertook the ceremony of his funeral rites. He took his own shirt, overalls, and stockings—laid out the corpse decently, washed, shaved, and dressed it neatly—placed a candle by it, and himself and his fellow scholars took their seats around it in decent order, and passed the night in reading, singing, and serious conversation. He had a fashionable coffin made, and a grave dug in common form. At a suitable time they formed a procession, and carried the corpse to the place of interment. Just as they were about to set out for the grave, a white man who was present, proposed that they should put the corpse into a cart. "No!" said M'Intosh, "we shall not show such disrespect for the dead." Four of them, therefore, carried the bier—moved to the place with solemnity—performed the last offices of friendship with a gravity becoming christians, and with minds penetrated with the expectation of a future resurrection, (a subject which had been canvassed amongst them) returned with composure to their former employ. This was done without the aid or counsel of any but themselves. The bible and their education have produced this effect, and will soon give a regulation to the taste of the nation. The doctrine of the resurrection has been often mentioned, in order to inspire them with proper sentiments in regard to the dead—and by many of the nations it is pretty well

understood. After a long conversation with one of the principal chiefs, respecting death and the resurrection, he paused in solemn silence for a while, and then with a significant smile, as if pleased with the discovery, "Oh!" said he, "I understand it." "It is just like a snake in the spring, which leaves its old skin and goes away new." Their ideas are usually expressed by allusions to nature, as was practised in the eastern world. There are very few doctrines but I can explain by the help of the interpreters I have made in the school—who, by reading in the bible, are familiar with the truths I wish to state.

Sabbath, a week, I spent between two and three hours in stating to a chief, the nature of the moral law—the ten commandments—and showed that they were equally binding on all, red, white, and black—that the miseries of mankind arose from disobeying those precepts—that conscience was wounded, and the great Spirit was angry—that this was what made one people go to war with another, which they ought not to do, being all brothers—that this was the cause why they removed from each other, became strangers to one another, and by it forgot their God—that many white people continued in that way, and were called *bad*—that those were the ones with whom they had been most acquainted—that some white people were ashamed of such conduct, were sorry at their heart, and wished all others to become like themselves; that to cure this disobedience and give pardon to the offenders, the Son of the great Spirit, and like himself, had come to die in the room of those wicked children; that he had given them his book (the bible) to tell them what they had done, what he had undertaken and accomplished for them, and what they must do to live with Him and his Father; that it was this good Being who had put it into the hearts of the good people to send their money, and be interested for their children. This, and much more, being interpreted by one of the scholars, he exclaimed, "Oh! he must be a good Being, we must love him."

The Indians are so much in the spirit of agriculture, that they are clearing very considerable plantations of land, in convenient situations throughout the nation; and many of the best characters of them have invited decent white families to live with them as tenants, and assist them in acquiring the art of husbandry. This, if prudently managed, will cement the bonds of friendship

between the red and white people; diffuse the knowledge of the English language through the nation; increase a spirit of industry, and enhance the value of property. Many of these families are serious professors of religion, and their example will establish the observance of the sabbath, and some of the important usages of christianity; and efface the pernicious influence of those base wretches who have sought for shelter from punishment in the nation. Is not the time of their salvation near at hand?

I am, &c.

GIDEON BLACKBURN.

POETRY.

To the Editor of the Evangelical Intelligencer.

DEAR SIR,

A PIOUS lady of this city, who lately departed this life, triumphant in Christ, has left several manuscripts of original composition equally valuable for genius and devotion. If quite agreeable, your occasional insertion, in your useful publication, of such communications from them as I shall take the liberty of sending, will oblige, dear sir, A SUBSCRIBER.

The following hymn may serve as a specimen.

THE TARES AND WHEAT.

SEE in the outer church below,
The tares and wheat together grow;
But Christ ere long will weed the crop,
And pluck the tares in anger up.

The same we seem, while thus we meet,
Strangers might fancy all were wheat;
But to the Saviour's searching eyes,
The stem appears without disguise.

O how 'twill aggravate our case,
To perish under means of grace;
Nought will avail, how much we knew,
How long among the wheat we grew!

Spar'd are the tares for various ends,
Some for the sake of praying friends;
Others the Lord against their will,
Employs his counsels to fulfil.

What though they rise both tall, and strong,
His plan will not require them long;
In harvest, when he saves his own,
The tares shall into hell be thrown.

S. E.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? James, iv. 14.

TRAV'LLING by night as well as day,
Meeting and leaving straight thy host;
Pausing for nothing in the way,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a POST. Job, ix. 25.

Beauteous and gay in early bloom,
Mow'd by the sithe with sweeping pow'r!
Or, with'ring, thrown into the tomb,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a FLOWER. Job, xiv. 2.

Short in its measure, soon defin'd,
By heav'n determin'd, not by man;
Extended wish'd by all thy kind,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a SPAN. Ps. xxxix. 5.

Varied with incident, the smile,
The tear, alternately prevail;
Trifling or sad—retained awhile,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a TALE. Ps. xc. 9.

Empty and short, now pleas'd, now pain'd,
Fiction and fact in thy esteem;
With virtues blest, with vices stain'd,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a DREAM. Job, xx. 8.

Soon spent—sport of the changing blast,
Silent as night, now roaring loud;
Gaz'd on by thousands, quickly past,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a CLOUD. Job, vii. 9.

Varying, uncertain—measuring time,
Moving direct or retrograde;
Offspring of light—in every clime,
Say mortal, what's thy life?—a SHADE. James, iv. 14.

Is life a post, a flow'r, a span,
A tale, a dream, a cloud, a shade!
Cease then, my soul, to trust in man,
Fear God, and never be dismay'd.

O how I love thy law. Ps. cxix. 97.

FAIR record of my father's will,
Companion of the anguish'd mind,
Oft hast thou been my lamp, and still
Comfort and light from thee I find.

While on my thirsty soul descend
Thy evening dews and morning rains;
Roots shall like Lebanon extend,
And corn and lilies charm the plains.

Possessions, spoils, or gold refin'd,
The luscious honey's dropping cells,
Give no such treasures to the mind;
In them no equal sweetness dwells.

From thee my quiver let me fill,
Or bear thee as my conquering sword;
Fainting, I stoop to drink thy rill,
And vigorous rise to bless my Lord.

With thee the rough path I'll pursue,
My faithful chart, my staff, my rod;
My glass, through which all heav'n I view,
'Till loos'd from earth, I rise to God.

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